

PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION (2)

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Despite all of which, and the lack of structurally significant rules of inheritance of property or status (names sometimes being handed on down to alternate generations, but not necessarily so), and with no apparent concomitant inheritance of status, certainly not of property, there is a recognition of the patrilineage, and a tendency toward patrilocality.³

2. AGE is the prime factor in dividing the band into significant units, the significance being seen in terms of domestic, economic, legal and governmental responsibilities. Each age level has a distinct role that contributes to the total social order, and in all these aspects of life it is consistently of greater import than kinship. The consistency still remains as firm in religious life, and following the ultimate crisis of death. The dead belong, as it were, to yet another age level, and one that is almost dissociated from the four levels of the living. Thus after death there is no familial concern for the dead, as seen in the complete lack of concern with ancestral ghosts. Far from disclaiming the dead relatives through fear⁴, the Mbuti continue to regard them with affection insofar as they regard them at all. Their preference for forgetting the dead reflects an attitude toward death, not to the individual dead.

Each age level has its own way of earning the respect of the band as a whole, by fulfilling what is referred to as its "duty." Thus the duty of children is to grow up in good health. The duty of youths is to sing, flirt and play—and help the parental level. The duty of the hunters is to hunt and, oddly enough, to create *akami*, or noise, and the duty of

³ We have to assert that there is, for the moment, no evidence that the territorial band is a product of special considerations, as suggested by Steward and Service (in whose terminology the band is "composite"). In particular we must reject, for the Mbuti, the assertion of Service (1962, p. 49) so convenient to his argument for virilocality, that all such societies were, before they were "so thoroughly subjugated," characterized by fighting between "unrelated groups," resulting in "fears, dangers and enmities." Also it is necessary to deny his assertion that such societies are "enclaved among more powerful neighbours—and cannot but lose or be heavily punished for any breach of the peace." If anything, in the Ituri, it is the villages that are enclaved. Further gross misrepresentation, perhaps owing to paucity of reliable material, is offered by Service (1962, p. 108) in the bald statement: "The composite band, on the other hand, is obviously a product of the near-destruction of aboriginal bands after contact with civilization. In all cases there is conclusive evidence of rapid depopulation by disease which, when combined with ending of hostilities among the aborigines themselves under the dominance of the common enemy, resulted in the merging of previously unrelated peoples." The evidence now available, while not denying the possible validity of such historical reconstruction, in no way supports it. Indeed, there is evidence to the contrary.

⁴ For an example of precisely the opposite situation, see Beattie (1960, p. 76), where concern for kinship obligations during life is continued after death, resulting in a desire to disavow relationships.